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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR, AND ALSO PASS USAID

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: JEM CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEFRA ATTACK AND CONTINUES TO
HOLD HOSTAGES

REF: KHARTOUM 1664

¶1. (SBU) On October 28, Abdulaziz Nur Ushar, who claimed to be the Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM,) told EconOff that his movement is responsible for the October 24 attack on the Defra oil facility where JEM fighters allegedly captured five hostages (an Egyptian, Iraqi, and three Sudanese drivers.) Defra is located in oil block 4 of South Kordofan state. Ushar stated that the Egyptian hostage claims to be a Canadian citizen. Ushar promised that JEM was treating the hostages well, and claimed that "we did not mean to capture the civilians." He threatened that foreign oil companies must leave the area by October 31 or face more attacks from JEM. He stated that JEM will not harm or kill the hostages even if foreign companies stay past October 31. He said JEM is not motivated by money and would not accept any ransom for the release of the hostages. He was not willing to disclose the name of the field commander responsible for the attack, nor the number of field soldiers involved in it.

¶2. (SBU) Ushar gave a number of reasons for the attack on the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) facility. He claimed that "China helps the Government of Sudan commit genocide," stating that the attack on the GNPOC facility is an attack on China. (Note: The Chinese National Petroleum Company has the largest share in GNPOC. End Note.) He also stated that all of the men who participated in the attack were men from Kordofan who decided to "join the revolution." He noted that these individuals joined his movement because they were frustrated that they had not benefited from the oil revenues coming from Kordofan. He added that when the people of Kordofan have tried to peacefully raise this issue before, the Sudanese intelligence apparatus countered their protests with force. He cited a protest in Kordofan from June 2007 as one example where intelligence operatives killed three protestors from Kordofan.

¶3. (SBU) Ahmed Daoud, who claimed to be an assistant to Khalil Ibrahim, the head of the main faction of JEM, also told EconOff on October 28 that JEM attacked the Defra facility and currently is holding the hostages. Daoud told EconOff that foreign oil companies have until October 31 to leave the area, adding that JEM will then attack oil fields starting on November 1.

4 (SBU) On October 28, the Vice-President of the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, Dr. Yousif Mohamed Ahmed told EconOff that his company continues to negotiate for the release of three hostages (two contractors of Egyptian and Iraqi nationality, and a Sudanese driver) taken at the Defra oilfield on October 24. He said that his company is considering paying \$200,000 in ransom for the release of the hostages. He did not share the names of the individuals or group holding the hostages when asked who he was negotiating with.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Although there have been isolated attacks on oil fields in the past (reftel), JEM's threat to specifically target

foreign oil companies in the future appears to be unprecedented. It is part of a larger effort by this aggressive rebel group to expand the Darfur conflict into neighboring Kordofan. Post will continue to attempt to contact the Canadian and Egyptian embassies and meet officials from the Ministry of Energy and Mining to discuss the GoS response to this threat. End Comment.

FERNANDEZ